REMARKS

Claims 1, 4, 7-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) over U.S. patent no. 6,787,415 to Chung et al. Claims 2-3 and 5-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Chung.

Claim 1 is supported by the original disclosure as follows:

> (a) forming ... first conductive gates **(select gates 144S in Figs. 3B, 18A)** ..., the first conductive gates being spaced from each other and not electrically interconnected **(at the stage of Fig. 18A)**;
>
> ...
>
> (d) forming at least one conductive line **(WL 144, Fig. 3B)** electrically interconnecting two or more of the first conductive gates.

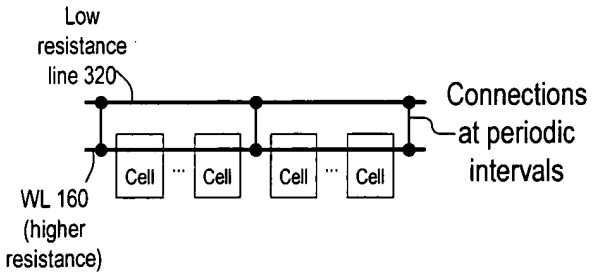
Claim 1 is not limited to the embodiments discussed herein.

Claim 1 thus recites in paragraph (d) that a "conductive line" electrically interconnects first conductive gates which are not electrically interconnected at the stage of paragraph (a) of Claim 1.

The Examiner reads Applicant's first conductive gates on Chung's wordlines 160 of Fig. 3B, and Applicant's first conductive line on Chung's metal strap line 320. The examiner states:

> ... it is clear that the conductive line 320 will eventually be part of an electrical interconnection between the gates 160.

This is traversed for the following reason. Chung's strap line 320 "runs over the corresponding wordline 160 and electrically contacts the wordline ... at periodic intervals" to reduce the resistance between different wordline portions (column 3, lines 30-38). Chung refers, in column 3, lines 33-35, to U.S. patent application 09/972,388, now U.S. patent no. 6,584,018. This patent is enclosed as Exhibit A. Please note Fig. 6 of that patent and the discussion of strap lines 430 starting in column 4, line 62. In view of Chung's disclosure, Chung's strap lines 320 can be depicted as in the following diagram:



As explained in Chung's column 3, lines 35-38, lines 320 may have a lower resistance than word lines 160. Therefore, when a word line 160 is driven with some voltage, the voltage is quickly distributed to different portions of the word line (and hence to different memory cells) by the corresponding line 320.

Chung does not teach or suggest that a line 320 interconnects discontinuous (not electrically connected) pieces of layer 160.

Claims 2-9 depend from Claim 1.

Any questions regarding this case can be addressed to the undersigned at the telephone number below.

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